

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens and residents of Saskatchewan. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petitions come from the Buchanan, Sturgis, Canora, Yorkton, Young, Zelma areas of the province.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have petitions to present to the Assembly. Petitions . . . I'd like to read the prayer first:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitions are signed from individuals from across the south-east — Glenavon, Rocanville, Windthorst, Grenfell, Estevan, Langbank, Quill Lake, Kelso, Wawota, and a number from the Theodore area.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the Redvers, Regina, Archerwill, Rose Valley areas of the province, also throughout all the north-east corner and some from the south-east, Mr. Speaker. I present these today.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions to present on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan as well today. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Coming from the areas of Indian Head, Sintaluta, Qu'Appelle, Springside, Theodore, quite a few from the Theodore area, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to lay them on the Table now.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my colleagues this afternoon in presenting petitions to the Legislative Assembly, and the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners that I have this afternoon come from the northern part of Saskatchewan, more specifically, Turtleford, Livelong, Edam, Spruce Lake, Southey — a number of pages from Southey here — Spiritwood, Leoville, Medstead, and many, many more from Spiritwood, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to table these at this time.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions here. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I have petitioners from Edam, Turtleford, Tisdale, Star City, Melfort, Canwood, P.A. (Prince Albert), Weldon, Shellbrook, Tisdale, Rockglen, Scott. I table them for the petitioners today.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me today to rise in the Assembly and table the names of concerned Saskatchewan citizens. I will read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I have concerned citizens from the communities of Rosetown, Turtleford, Spalding, Quill Lakes, Spalding again; people all over the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I gladly table these today on their behalf.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, have petitions that I will table with respect to the NewGrade upgrader and I will read the prayer and table them.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The people here that I am tabling represent the communities of Tisdale and Admiral.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7), they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province praying that the Assembly defeat any legislation introduced to redefine the NewGrade Energy Inc. corporate governance and financing arrangements.

And:

Of citizens of the province praying that the Assembly cause the government to order SaskPower to facilitate the production of non-utility generated power in areas of increased demand.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Solomon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, 28 grade 4 students from St. Angela School in the constituency I represent, Regina North West. They are seated, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery. They are accompanied by their teacher Laurie Ruhr, and chaperon Sylvia Gervais.

I would look forward to meeting with them after question period, Mr. Speaker, to discuss matters of the Assembly and any other questions they want to raise with me. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to this Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, two groups today.

One was a surprise group, but I'm very happy to see them. In the east gallery is Barb Fraser, Melissa Lerat, Maggie Angiyo, Tina Pelletier, and Clint Saulteaux, who are all summer students at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College summer institute of journalism.

And although we haven't arranged to have pictures, if you want to meet me out on the stairs at 2:30 I've got another group I'm having pictures with and we could have our picture taken, if you'd like. Clint Saulteaux I worked with at Rainbow Youth Centre. It's nice to see you. And could you join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — My other group in the Speaker's gallery is 16 grade 7 and 8 students from Holy Rosary School. We have Clarence Demchuk, their principal with them, and Leona Carigan, community coordinator. And we're going to be meeting for a photo at 2:30 and a drink after question period. So again I thank you to welcome them with me.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, Dr. Dixie Lee Ray who is in your gallery. If Dr. Ray would stand please. Dr. Ray is a former governor of the state of Washington. She is a recipient of the United Nations peace prize, a university professor, and an author on the role scientists should be playing in helping address environmental issues.

Dr. Ray will be speaking this evening in Saskatoon on the topic of the trashing of the planet. She is here as a guest of the Canadian Nuclear Society. And I would like all members of our Assembly to please join with me in welcoming her today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, members of the Regina Rotary Club who have with them six gentlemen from Japan. They are also members of the Rotary Club there. And I will apologize to them in advance as I read their names with an English accent.

We have with us Mr. Karino Toshikazu who is the team leader. Mr. Masamichi Miura who is interested in real estate marketing practices in Canada and in our city. Mr. Matsuki Kameoka who is someone who works for the city of Shiroishi. Mr. Hideaki Hishinuma, and he is an officer in the local hospital so is very interested in hospital operation here. We have Mr. Katsuhiko Sato who works for the town office; and Mr. Takemi Suzuki, who is also a worker in the town office and a planner.

With them is Mr. Dai Sato who's the interpreter from

the Regina Rotary Club; and also someone I was working with at the city of Regina, a city police officer, Mr. Rod Ash, who has just returned from a visit to Japan.

I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome them, and hopefully they will learn a lot from viewing the participation of members in the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Saskatoon Greystone in extending words of welcome to Dr. Dixie Lee Ray, because I will be going to Saskatoon this afternoon and I'll have the pleasure of hearing Dr. Ray and meeting with her at the annual meeting of the Canadian Nuclear Society. And I very much look forward to her remarks.

As the member from Greystone has said, she's a very distinguished guest to our province. And I too would like to welcome Dr. Ray.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, a group of 23 students, grade 7 to 12 students from Artesian School, Spring Valley, my constituency Bengough-Milestone, who are visiting here today. They are seated in the east gallery.

And I'm looking forward to having a visit with them after and having drinks and photos. I'm sure we'll have a good discussion and question time about the proceedings here today. I ask all members to help me join in welcoming this group from Spring Valley.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to join with members of the legislature in welcoming Dr. Ray to the Legislative Assembly here in Saskatchewan and let her know that we really appreciate having people come into the province of Saskatchewan and speak about environment issues, particularly those associated with nuclear energy, and welcome Walter Keys who is with her, to take my hat off to him for all the work that he has done in promoting sound environmental knowledge with respect to the nuclear industry and wish you well, both of you, in the days ahead.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like just to take a moment to recognize a group of elite people in this Assembly. They happen to be sitting above you, Mr. Speaker — the press corps. And I notice there's a number of vacancies and I don't know if that exactly reflects the strenuousness they put into the ball game last night, but, Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest that if we'd have had your presence and your unbiased opinion behind the plate, we might

have . . . the outcome of the game might have been a little more favourable. But we want to extend our congratulations to the media.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Free Vote on Bill 38

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice and actually to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Justice laughed off the suggestion of a free vote in this Assembly so that all the members of his caucus would be able to stand up and exercise their opinion on Bill 38.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, the minister knows fair well that his comments of yesterday that there was one vote taken; the vote has already been taken; there won't be any more votes, Mr. Speaker, we all know that there will be numerous votes taking place in this Assembly as yet.

I would ask the minister and the Premier if he would do the honourable thing, if he would get out from behind his desk and be the honourable leader that he attempts to portray.

Mr. Premier, will you allow a free vote on Bill 38 in order that all MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) may fully stand in their place and represent the overwhelming wishes of their constituents?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, if I may respond, I want to say to the member opposite that I don't know how the decisions are made in the Conservative caucus when they deliberate on the legislation or any other debate that is taken on in this House. I think I know how the debate takes place in the Liberal caucus.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that in the New Democratic Party caucus there is a considerable amount of debate and exchange of views openly and the caucus of the government makes a decision on whether there is going to be a support for a piece of legislation. The New Democratic Party caucus, the government caucus, has made such a decision. We brought forward the amendments to Bill 38 because we think they're important, because they provide some legislation to protect people from discrimination on the basis of employment and on the basis of shelter. I don't think there's anybody in society who can object to that and neither do the members of the government caucus. If the member from Moosomin and his members want to object to that, that is their right. We have had a vote on second reading, which is on the principle of the Bill and, Mr. Speaker, that vote is now completed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, and to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I don't know if you heard the open-line show

this morning, but I must say as I was on the open-line I was surprised to say the least. I was surprised to find that about the calls that came in fully 100 per cent totally disagreed with the way you, your minister, and your government is handling Bill 38. In fact many of them, Mr. Premier, stood up and they said: why won't the Premier allow his members to stand up openly in this Assembly. Why is he shackling them? Why are you shackling them, Mr. Premier? Why are you denying them the opportunity to represent the views of their constituents? Why will you not give them the ability to stand up openly, rather than forcing them not to appear in the Assembly when the vote is taken on third and final reading? Will you not now, Mr. Premier, allow your members to have a direct impact by voting freely according to their conscience in representing their constituents. Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the distinction that exists between that side of the House — at least closer to you, Mr. Speaker — and this side of the House. Because in the process of the debates that have taken place in this legislature in this session, this government has brought in legislation to protect workers in the workplace from injury and from death. The members opposite have opposed that.

The government has brought in legislation to protect people from discrimination from residence, and shelter, and from employment. The Progressive Conservative Party has opposed that. We stand behind the proposals that we bring forward on those two very important, fundamental issues to all human beings, and workers, and citizens of this province. And we will support it because we believe in what those amendments bring forward. If the members wish to oppose that, that is their right. They will have to explain to the public why they oppose any amendments that bring protection to people from accident, from injury, from death, and from discrimination.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Deputy Premier since he's answering the questions today. I just want to remind the Deputy Premier, in case he wasn't here for the debate, that there were over 60 amendments put forward on workers' comp and occupational health and safety, put forward by this side of the House to strengthen and increase the flexibility of those Bills. And yet the government voted totally against them.

Mr. Premier, it's quite clear that you will not allow a free vote. It's quite clear that the last shred of democracy left your leadership when you took the chair, a position that you hold on to jealously. In spite of your wish that this issue just fade away, Mr. Premier, there will be another vote.

Mr. Premier, in the absence of a free vote, will you then admit that for every empty chair on your side of the House, that for every member that refuses to

summon the courage to stand and be counted, as members of the public asked this morning, a vote has been cast not only against the consequences of Bill 38, but a vote has been cast against your dictatorial leadership? Is that not true, Mr. Deputy Premier?

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, if that was the conclusion that one should draw from the way the member describes it, then clearly the member of the Liberal Party, who was not present for many of those votes, one can conclude whether she took a position one way or the other.

I don't make any conclusion because from time to time members are not in the House. All of the members of the Progressive Conservative Party were not in the House. But I can say one thing very clearly, that this government carefully considers all legislation that we bring forward with all of its implications. And from time to time, Mr. Speaker, as was the case — and I am told about a half a dozen of the amendments proposed to The Occupational Health and Safety Act by the members opposite — we'll accept reasonable amendments that help to improve the Bill. And they were accepted, Mr. Speaker, because they were reasonable amendments.

But when the amendments do not make any sense to the legislation, they will not be accepted because we're here to do what's right and not here to do what's political.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I take the next question, I do want to remind the Deputy Premier he is not to refer to the presence or absence of any particular member in the legislature.

Information on Hospital Conversions

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health, and perhaps we will have more success in getting her to agree to listen to the will of the people, Mr. Speaker.

Madam Minister, back in April when you cut off funding for the 52 Saskatchewan hospitals and when you used closure to ram your destructive legislation through this legislature, many people in those communities had questions that they want answered, and you provided all kinds of assurances that those answers would be forthcoming and that people would have nothing to worry about.

Well, Madam Minister, since that time a couple of months have passed and people in those communities are now more confused, frustrated, and angry than ever. You haven't answered their questions. You haven't answered their concerns. And yet the arbitrary deadline that you have proposed comes closer every day.

Madam Minister, the doors of Arborfield hospital will be closing on September 30 at 4 p.m. and 26 employees are being laid off. And they have yet to find

out whether your department will be providing enough transitional funding for their severance packages.

Madam Minister, why is there still so much confusion and so many unanswered questions when you have assured us that all of these issues will be addressed by now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, there is not the confusion that the members opposite talk about. In fact there are a number of planning groups that are very close to forming districts in the province. We anticipate that most of the districts will be in place by August 17.

I am told that there's a tremendous amount of work going on. The departmental officials have been dealing with planning groups and hospital boards that are affected by the reductions in acute care funding. They are looking at alternatives with respect to placement of patients. There has been a core services discussion paper that has been developed for planning groups to discuss. There will be a meeting some time next week for the rural health advisory committee to talk about options in how the transition will take place. There has been an incredible amount of work taking place in the province.

That doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that there aren't anxieties — there are. And people will have concerns and they will have anxieties, and we deal with their questions as they come up, and departmental officials are meeting with all these boards and discussing things with them on an ongoing basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, there's one salient point that you just made to which I will agree: there's an awful lot of anxiety out there and that's why we're still continuing to have phone calls. Madam Minister.

We've spoken to a number of those hospitals that are doing everything that they can to try to remain open. But they don't know how much interim funding they are going to be receiving. They aren't getting the information and the cooperation that they deserve from your government. In some cases, they don't even know what health district they're going to be part of.

Because of all of these factors, Madam Minister, they honestly don't know if they're going to be open come October 1. The employees don't know whether they're going to have a job. They don't know whether they're going to have to move some place else, or to try to sell their house. They aren't getting any answers to those questions, Madam Minister. Yet that October 1st deadline is hanging over their heads like a guillotine.

Madam Minister, quite frankly, it's not too late to set this deadline back and admit that both the

government and those communities need more time. Will you do that?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I do want to reiterate the fact that there has been a tremendous amount of progress that has taken place in the last month or two on this very issue. There are several months for us to work with communities and with the hospital boards and planning groups to get all the final touches in place. I am advised by the Department of Health that it is progressing very well.

We hope to have many districts up by August 17, and the October 1 deadline should be met. As I indicated, Mr. Speaker, there is going to be a meeting next week through which a number of discussion papers will be put forward and will be discussed at some length by planning groups and health care stakeholders and advisers. And it is a part of the process of consultation and working forward with creative solutions to some of the difficulties that people are facing throughout Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that the people of Saskatchewan are working very hard to meet the deadlines, and the Department of Health is giving them a lot of assistance in that regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, I know for a fact that you were out to one or two meetings across the province. Now what you have just told this Assembly is that the Department of Health is assuring you that things are progressing very well. That's what you just said.

Well, Madam Minister, welcome to the real world. Stay in touch with the people out there. For example, these communities and the residents in these communities are doing their best to work with a government under these most difficult circumstances, but they're finding it extremely futile.

In Cabri, for example, Madam Minister, the hospital board there wanted to join the Rolling Hills health district. That was originally approved by you. They started planning on that basis. And now the government has told them, whoops, you can't join that district because we don't want you to. You have to join a different district.

Madam Minister, after all the assurance you gave us about local control and local decision-making, why is this happening? And why should residents be putting their time, their effort and resources in trying to make this work when the government is going to come along and willy-nilly, do what you want anyway and tear up any progress that they may have made. Why, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — With respect to, you know, local involvement, I think it's very important, Mr. Speaker, for people to be involved at the community levels. I think it's important for people to have input and be involved with the consultations with the Department

of Health. And we do that, not just in the health care area, but in many areas across government.

It doesn't mean, however, that everything everyone wants is going to be exactly the way it is. Consultation doesn't mean that if you ask for "a" you get "a". Now I'm not speaking with respect to the Cabri situation because I don't have the details of that.

So if the member opposite has specific situations, very detailed little situations about this particular area having some difficulty, they should come and advise me of that and I will look into the matter. So I'm prepared to look at specific situations that they may raise.

However, I do want to say this: there is massive consultation going on throughout the province — massive consultation, and it's been ongoing since August, Mr. Speaker — unlike the members opposite who didn't have the courage to even talk about health reform with respect to communities in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, if you were truly devoted to the consultative process, the dictatorship that you are showing and that your government is showing, and your . . . without hesitation your willingness to use closure or whatever means to get your way. That, Madam Minister, is not consultation, let me assure you.

You ask, do you have specific information? I've already raised Arborfield, I've already raised Cabri, in this question period. How many more do you want, Madam Minister? Hospitals are telling us that the interim funding that they are receiving is supposed to keep their hospital going for six months. And that's also supposed to, in addition, Madam Minister, pay for the severance packages.

Madam Minister, they are telling us that that's just not realistic. You want examples? Here's another one, Vanguard. Vanguard, for instance, has told us that the budget of \$10,000 a month that they are going to be receiving isn't enough to heat the building, let alone pay for severance packages. And they simply just have no idea where the money's going to be coming from.

Madam Minister, why is there so much confusion as to how this transitional funding is to be used? Why aren't these questions being answered? Why are my questions now not being answered? Why, Madam Minister, again, don't you just simply change the deadline and take more time to answer these questions, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Vanguard, Vanguard knows that the funding that will be allotted to Vanguard is going to the district board, and although some facilities get less funding than others, it goes into a pool to the district board. They know that already because they have

been told that. It isn't simply the funding that they receive and that's all they get with respect to their facility. It goes to the district board. And they're already part of a planning group so they know where they fit, where they belong, and they know that they will have access to a larger pool of funding. So it isn't as simplistic as the members opposite try to paint us.

Now the members opposite are standing here saying, more funding for our small hospitals, more funding for health care. Well I would like the member from Estevan and the member from Rosthern, who are supporting Charest for the leadership of the PC (Progressive Conservative) party, to tell us what the province of Saskatchewan's going to do when Charest fulfils his promise of cutting \$8 billion from transfer payments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Methinks Madam Minister is beginning to smart a little bit. She lights up her blame thrower right away. Now, Madam Minister . . . Madam Minister, now you're blaming it on the district boards again. You're saying if they want to spend it on it, that's fine. Offloading . . . not only are you offloading funding, but again, right now, we heard that you're offloading your responsibility.

Madam Minister, all we're asking for you is to keep your election promise. You promised you would spend more on health and education with no taxes. And this is what is happening to these people now, Madam Minister, knowing full well back in '91 what the fiscal situation in this province was. And in spite of that, you made promises.

Madam Minister, in Vanguard for instance, 24 employees are being laid off. And that's 10 per cent of their population, Madam Minister, by the way. That's 10 per cent of their population. That's like taking out the equivalent of 18,000 jobs in Regina or Saskatoon. And you have literally passed a death sentence on the entire community by bringing in a plan that you're not even sure is going to work, because you don't have any answers.

The minister, Mr. Speaker, says that some communities and some health districts are more organized than others. If that's the case, Madam Minister, I have a simple suggestion. Why not take those two or three examples that you're citing and create a pilot project that will make sure that the system will work, and get the bugs out before you pass such a death sentence on communities like Vanguard. Madam Minister, would you be willing to do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out already, there is a committee of health care professionals and planning groups looking at the whole issue of rural health services and we are going to be discussing that next week.

Now let's talk about who I blame for this. I blame the

members opposite and their friends in Ottawa — over \$500 million this year in transfer cuts. Let's talk about the cuts from Ottawa. Let's talk about that. Let's . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Order.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — This year we're short some 500 million, Mr. Speaker, because of the changes made by their cronies in Ottawa. We also have a \$15 billion debt that the member from Estevan, who's chirping from his seat, created and left a legacy to the people of this province — \$15 billion.

It's about time the members opposite faced reality for their actions and accepted some responsibility for their actions and the actions of their counterparts in Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Madam Minister very sincerely for the plug that she has been putting in for Mr. Charest. I really appreciate that and that'll be a good thing. With the \$17 million additional funding through equalization payments, Madam Minister, \$17 million extra, that's fine.

Madam Minister, the bottom line is, in this issue of the health, and your health initiatives, is simply this: there are too many unanswered questions. And when we raised that concern two months ago, you provided all sorts of assurances that these questions would be addressed by now. And that simply hasn't happened, Madam Minister.

You said that no facilities would be closing. And now we know that they are. Arborfield is laying off 26 employees; Vanguard is laying off 24; Cupar is laying off 23. Hospitals don't even know if they'll have enough money to pay the severance packages. Some hospitals are not being allowed to join the districts that they want to join. Their local decision making is being hampered. People in these communities don't know whether their hospital, Madam Minister, will be open or closed. They don't know how far they're going to have travel for emergency care. And they do not feel that your government is responding to their concerns or addressing their questions.

Madam Minister, what answer do you have for those people? Why should they believe you now when all the assurances that you gave them back in April are beginning to ring hollower and hollower. Why, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite simply raises red herrings and a lot of nonsense. He knows full well that there's massive consultation, that the board . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I'm not cutting off the minister. I'm simply holding up the question period until the opposition gives the minister a chance at least to answer the question.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — . . . full well that there is consultation going on, that the funding levels have been provided to facilities, that they are working with individual hospitals. And of course there will be people who express concerns as we go through this process. But the process is taking place. And it is taking place quite effectively throughout the province with a lot of discussion with respect to future services that will be provided in rural communities and how we will phase those in. So there's a lot of positive things going on.

I think the people of Saskatchewan are more interested in knowing, Mr. Speaker, what advice the campaign manager for Mr. Charest is giving him when he suggests an . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you have embarked on your own version of your unfair-share system. I want to talk for a moment about the families that are involved. I have just listed for you 26 employees being laid off in Arborfield. Vanguard is laying off 24. Cupar is laying off 23. Madam Minister, do you have any feeling for the families of these many, many people that are now going to see themselves being forced and uprooted, a total uncertainty for their future?

Madam Minister, what do you say to those people? What assurances can you give to these men and these women and their families and their children that yes, there is a reason for them to remain in Saskatchewan? What will you say to them, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite also knows that there will be some jobs created in community-based services that people will be able to fill. The members opposite know that. Now it may not mean that everybody who's being laid off is going to be re-employed, but we will, over a period of time, be moving toward more community-based services.

Now I would like to ask the member opposite about the feelings of these people and what he was thinking of when he squandered \$15 billion in this province. Where was he about considering the feelings of families and children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren? Because they're going to be paying for your squandering of public dollars over a period of nine and a half years to the tune of \$15 billion. What were you doing and were you thinking about the feelings of these families? And is the member from Estevan thinking . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. As soon as members come to order we can go on to the next item on our agenda. Why is the member from Kelsey-Tisdale on

his feet?

Mr. Renaud: — To ask leave, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Renaud: — I would like to introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the Assembly, 18 grade 5 students in the west gallery, from Archerwill, Saskatchewan. They are accompanied today by Linda McAuley-Elliott, their teacher; and some friends: Lorraine McLeod, Doris Wilson, Eugene Chorney, and Charmaine Wilgosz. And I would like you to join with me in wishing them a very enjoyable visit to the Assembly and to Regina and a safe trip home today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — I too would like to join the member to welcome Linda, who used to teach up in La Ronge, and . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — I'd like to join the member to welcome Linda who used to teach up in La Ronge and also in Cumberland House.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join the member in welcoming Linda and her class over here at the legislature. She used to teach up in Cumberland House and also in La Ronge and other areas. We thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knezacek: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I beg leave of the Assembly to make a brief, pressing report to the Assembly on a matter of utmost importance and urgency.

Leave granted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Media-MLA Ball Game

Mr. Knezacek: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to report on the annual softball game between the MLAs and the media. The game was held before a crowd of thousands last night at Sherwood Forest just outside of Regina. As usual it was a hard-fought but friendly game. I would just caution members about believing some of the rumours they may have heard about the final score of the game. While indeed the media team got lucky this year, the score was much closer than the press are claiming. In fact one might say we didn't lose, we just ran out of time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Mr. Knezacek: — However, as our team was in charge of the official scoreboard or score card, anyone wanting to know the final score will have to find out in the usual democratic way and that is to fill out a freedom of information request form.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, it was a close game. It would have been closer if the media hadn't engaged in one of those nasty filibusters in the sixth inning. Seldom has there been such an appalling lack of democratic tradition in a baseball game, Mr. Speaker. In fact someone suggested from the bench we should have imposed time allocation and then closure on the sixth inning.

I would like to take a few moments more to highlight some of the stars of last night's game, Mr. Speaker. On the MLA side, the member from Thunder Creek made a strong case for his leadership aspirations by hitting an inside-the-park home run. Not to be outdone, the member from Kindersley followed with another solid shot to deep centre field. Unfortunately, the member from Kindersley's campaign kind of ran out of gas as he rounded second base.

Another of the MLA stand-outs was the member from Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain. While the member played his usual strong game, he still refuses to dive for those foul balls for fear of getting dirt on that pretty uniform. I'd also like to recognize the strong pitching performance by the member from Regina Albert South.

The media squad had several stand-out players as well, Mr. Speaker, the brightest of which were the four women of the press team. If not for the stellar play of these four players, Mr. Speaker, the media would have gone down to defeat for sure.

I would also like to single out the play of the media team captain, Murray Mandryk, from the Regina *Leader-Post*. Mr. Mandryk had a pretty good day at the bat, but nobody could quite figure out what he was doing in the out field. Just like the logic in his newspaper columns, Mr. Mandryk couldn't decide if he wanted to play left, right, or centre field.

I also want to say how much both teams missed your presence at the game, Mr. Speaker. However, I'm sure you had a wonderful time exploring all the lovely farm land around the Regina district. I'm told that next time, Mr. Speaker, we will ensure you are given a detailed map of the location of the ball diamond.

Most importantly of all, Mr. Speaker, last night's game raised money for a worthy cause. A total of \$156 was collected, which will be donated to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

All in all it was a good night for a good cause. And I would like to congratulate the 20 MLAs who

participated in last night's game, and also the media team who will be in custody of the trophy until next year this time.

And I'd like to close on this personal note, Mr. Speaker. In the words of some great baseball manager before me, I believe it was Casey Stengel, who said: I coached well, but boy, did they play badly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, with leave to make a statement on Environment Week.

Leave granted.

National Environment Week

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in recognition of National Environment Week. I am pleased to see more and more attention being paid every day to the environment. As a member of the provincial Environment Committee, I have been able to attend many meetings in many parts of the province.

As a result of these meetings, I have heard many ideas and situations for environmental issues as well as concerns that have yet to be dealt with. There is hope for solutions to our environmental problems — working together. The environment is not going to be improved or enhanced or saved by a few people working very hard. It will however survive and prosper if each and every one of us do our part to save the environment.

I would like to mention an effort which is supported by everyone in this province, and that is the SARCAN recycling system for beverage containers. Hopefully we can develop a similar system to recycle other products in our society such as paper, tires, and plastics.

Another environmental concern is the health of our agricultural land. We must encourage and develop better soil conservation methods and programs which reflect our growing awareness of environmental issues in dealing with the land. This concern becomes even more critical whenever we face a drought. For with a drought we see severe wind erosion of the soil. This cannot continue without a loss of our most productive land.

It is incumbent on the government and on the stakeholders to work together and find solutions to this problem that we have faced in this province since the first plough broke the land.

I would like to encourage all Saskatchewan residents to continue to learn more about the world we live in and what we can do to preserve it. After all, Mr. Speaker, that's the only way we can make our world a better place for our children and our grandchildren. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 79

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 79 — An Act to Provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I observed question period take place today, I was beginning to think that maybe the Premier better come out from behind his desk very quickly or he'll find the member from Regina Hillsdale taking over as Premier.

It would seem to me when we look at the debate taking place in this Assembly regarding constituencies and the redistribution of electoral boundaries and after the debate that has taken place over the past number of days, past number of weeks, I can see why the government today is looking very seriously at redistributing the boundaries and establishing new boundaries in the province of Saskatchewan. Because it would appear to me that if we left the boundaries as they are, the government is indeed in serious trouble.

Even in the urban sectors, I think just from the responses to the phone-in this morning on the open line, Mr. Speaker, it indicates that the calls came in from across the province, from within the city of Regina, and there was an overwhelming, in fact a resounding no, to what the government is doing on a number of issues, specifically Bill 38. And then you get into the debate that we'll be entering into a little later as well, on Bill 90. And then even the boundary question.

And one has to ask themselves, what's the government specifically up to? What are they trying to hide? Why are they bringing in another boundary commission today when the boundaries . . . other than the fact that maybe the debate over the number of MLAs in this Assembly is something that could be raised, and we on this side of the House have brought it forward time and time again. It would seem to me that the suggestions put forward by my colleague, the member from Thunder Creek and certainly by our caucus, are very sound and certainly very open. And it would seem to me from reports, it would be very acceptable to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as I enter again the debate on Bill 79 and debating the electoral boundaries and the process by which they should be determined, I just want to

remind the Assembly that this is not a foreign process in this Assembly, or any other Legislative Assembly for that matter. Instead, this issue is one that has been debated at great length and on many separate occasions throughout the past several years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to go on and on about the NDP (New Democratic Party) political agenda. However, I believe it is easy to see that this Bill is before this Assembly for none other than political reasons.

And I mention that, Mr. Speaker, because we went through a format of redistribution, and certainly there was a lengthy debate that took place in this Assembly, less than, I believe it was four years ago — I believe 1990 to be exact. And at that time, to be entering into another redistribution — we know the costly process it takes — I find it inappropriate that the government would choose to now redesign and redraw the boundaries again.

Mr. Speaker, a government must first consider the effects of the methods when modifying constituency boundaries.

And, Mr. Speaker, before this issue is drafted into a Bill like Bill 79, the government presenting it should heed the advice of many highly qualified people and how they have examined this issue in depth, and they should take that advice and look at it very carefully before proceeding and just moving forward with another Bill to just redistribute boundaries and redesign boundaries across the province of Saskatchewan.

In 1982 Senator Gerald Beaudoin considered the possible impact of the democratic rights enshrined in section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and made some observations concerning the way Canada and its provinces were divided into constituencies for the purposes of conducting elections.

Those who know of Senator Beaudoin know he is both a law professor and a lawyer and former joint chairman on the amending procedure of the Constitution of Canada, and has also served on many committees including legal and constitutional affairs, aboriginal peoples, and many more.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Beaudoin in his comments, he said it was unfortunate, he said, that section 3 of the charter does not refer to equal suffrage, for there were reforms in that direction which were needed.

At the time in the United States the courts had mandated equal representation for equal numbers of people — one person, one vote — and it was to be expected that our courts would eventually be influenced by American jurisprudence.

Beaudoin went on to predict that in the event of the importation of the one person, one vote principle into Canada, the principle will be Canadianized to a certain extent under section 1 as a result of our

particular situation. That particular situation, Mr. Speaker, was characterized by sparse population and great distances — two factors which make it extremely difficult if not impossible to attain equality between ridings.

And, he added, one thing is certain. Excessive discrepancies in representation will tend to be reduced by the courts. There is much astuteness in Mr. Beaudoin's insights. Before the charter was very old, the Canadian courts did address discrepancies in representation and acted to reduce them.

Mr. Speaker, an attempt was made to Canadianize the American principle of one person, one vote by way of section 1 of the charter. The Saskatchewan Court of Appeal's 1991 decision striking down Saskatchewan's electoral map in reference re: provincial electoral boundaries, led on appeal to the first declaration by the Supreme Court of Canada on the subject of the electoral boundaries. And, Mr. Speaker, we all know the outcome of that case.

Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court upheld Saskatchewan's electoral map and concluded that what Beaudoin called Canada's particular situation required an interpretation of the section 3 right to vote which comprehended effective representation.

The same issues we must deal with today regarding boundaries, Mr. Speaker, were the same issues being considered in the Supreme Court just two short years ago. Before a decision was made regarding Saskatchewan's constituency boundaries, more than a dozen interveners, including the governments of Canada, five provinces, two territories, and two cities took part.

Mr. Speaker, the court's 6-3 decision, dated June 1, 1991, upheld the proposed changes to the Saskatchewan boundaries for the following reasons.

The question before the court, as stated by the majority, was: to what extent, if at all, does the right to vote enshrined in the charter permit deviation from one person, one vote rule? Two different views on this question had been presented.

According to the first view, equality of voting power was the right protected in section 3 of the charter, and deviations from the state of equality should be minimal. According to the second, effective representation was the protected right, and equality of voting power was but one consideration among several.

(1500)

The second view became the court's. The purpose of the right to vote enshrined in section 3 of the charter is not equality of voting power *per se*, but the right to effective representation.

Extremely important words, Mr. Speaker, when we have a Bill before us that is outlining changes to electoral boundaries in a province such as

Saskatchewan. Equality of voting power was desirable for what it contributed to effective representation.

At the same time, Justice McLachlin noted it was a practical fact that effective representation often cannot be achieved without taking into account countervailing factors. It was possible to have too much equality if achieved at the expense of other factors pertinent to effective representation.

One of the Supreme Court judges, Justice McLachlin, reiterated the position she had taken that the strict principle of one person, one vote, was neither appropriate for Canada nor part of its experience, and there was no evidence that the framers of the charter had contemplated the reading of such a principle into the provisions of that document. Mr. Speaker, the numbers were the weak side of the case against the Saskatchewan electoral map.

The Supreme Court not only condoned the distinction between rural and urban electors, which was reflected in the outcome, but the Supreme Court also underwrote that distinction by treating as fact the proposition that rural constituencies are more difficult to represent than urban ones. Mr. Speaker, the same holds true today.

Mr. Speaker, there are 10 MLAs for each, Regina and Saskatoon, cities where it takes more than maybe 20 minutes to drive from one end of the city to the other. Then there are ridings like Shaunavon where at least 150 miles separate the east-west borders of the constituency.

And talking about distances and travel, Mr. Speaker, we were just talking about hospital districts in question period this afternoon. And some of my colleagues and I went out for lunch and we happened to run into a couple from Ceylon, and they mentioned the problems that they are facing in trying to set up their district. And the district that they are being forced into or being asked to look at, Mr. Speaker, is going to require that in some instances people are going to be over 110 miles from their nearest hospital.

And, Mr. Speaker, anyone in Saskatchewan, even in our large urban centres, realizes the difficulty not only of individuals in our rural communities in receiving good health care, but also recognizes the difficulty that members of our society in our rural communities face in getting fair and equal representation due to the distances that many people have to travel and the largeness of our rural constituencies, and in light of the government's proposal, which may even become larger.

Different consideration must be given to these diverse situations because we all believe that people from Shaunavon deserve to be represented as thoroughly and effectively as those residents of Saskatoon. Effective representation — that's what it's all about.

Bill 79 does not allow for effective representation.

Bill 79 basically says: well we need to cut away the

voices of rural Saskatchewan but we won't touch northern Saskatchewan. This in itself is highly suspect, Mr. Speaker, considering this Bill strengthens NDP strongholds and eliminates some rural ridings.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the NDP government bothered appointing a boundaries commission to deal with this issue. The variances have already been set by the government and they think it is a done deal. Who knows, there may even be a map that's already drawn out that the boundaries commission is going to be asked just to bring before this Assembly for approval.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a much better solution, an alternative that has been welcomed by pretty much everyone, a proposal the members opposite are supposedly examining as well. Mr. Speaker, it's an alternative presented by my colleague, the member from Thunder Creek, and I believe it is fair to everyone.

In addition, it will save taxpayer dollars, more than the government's proposal, and also provide more effective representation. Mr. Speaker, the proposal presented by my colleague, the member from Thunder Creek, will also provide better coordination between the federal and provincial levels of government in our province.

Under our proposal, Mr. Speaker, each of the 14 federal constituencies would be divided into 4 provincial constituencies. This would produce a total of 56 provincial ridings — two less than the number proposed by the members opposite. And that's not all, Mr. Speaker. This system would eliminate the charges of gerrymandering that often accompany electoral boundary reviews, Bill 79 being no exception.

Mr. Speaker, the whole process of electoral boundaries would be depoliticized once and for all. Mr. Speaker, not only would it take the politics out of electoral commissions and changing of boundaries, it would save taxpayers dollars in three ways.

First, there would be fewer MLAs than currently serving in this legislature. And possibly, Mr. Speaker, we could go one further by suggesting . . . by looking at the federal boundaries, maybe the commission could even . . . rather, we're suggesting four members per constituency. Maybe the commission could be given a little more latitude in deciding the number of members.

Second, the work of the Provincial Boundary Commission would be less costly since the federal boundaries would provide a solid starting point from which to work.

Third, a provincial boundary commission would only have to be established every 10 years as the federal boundaries are redrawn.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP proposal establishes a new boundary commission every five years. That in itself becomes a fair expense to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Further benefits would be provided through better coordination between elected officials at the federal and provincial levels. Basically right now there is no rhyme or reason when you look at the federal boundary map compared to the provincial boundary map.

Under our proposal each federal riding would have exactly four provincial ridings within its boundary. And MLAs would not have their ridings broken up between two or more federal constituencies. This would make it much easier for our elected representatives at both levels to work together in the best interests of their constituents. Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that our proposal is fair, will save more money, and is much more efficient.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at what others have to say about our proposal. The *Leader-Post* says:

The PC's proposal of taking the existing federal boundaries and dividing each into four provincial ridings is even better than what the NDP legislation proposes for a few reasons:

It pares the Assembly down to 56 seats from the 58 MLAs proposed in the bill;

It could enhance federal/provincial co-operation by establishing a regional basis; and

It could result in all the ridings coming surprisingly close to the plus-or-minus five-per-cent variance the NDP bill proposes.

Eliminating the inherent unfairness of two special northern seats where votes are worth twice what they are in the south is the real genius of the Tory proposal.

And that's from the *Leader-Post*, May 22, 1993.

Mr. Speaker, there are many articles that support this proposal. And certainly the people are in favour of it. Many people that I have talked to have said it sounds fair and it sounds reasonable. And what people have also said, is it sounds like you're doing more than just complaining about changes or about the government, but at least you're putting proposals forward, or suggestions, or alternatives forward. And I think that's what people are looking for. Mr. Speaker, in a nutshell, our plan makes perfect sense, which is probably why this government will reject the idea.

In fact one headline says, it's so simple, it might work, if the government would listen.

Instead the NDP wanted to stick to Bill 79, there where the NDP control where the boundaries are drawn. And where did the proposal from the members opposite come from?

The *Star-Phoenix* said it best.

Our provincial politicians seem to have an unlimited talent for unnecessarily getting their shirts/blouses into knots. The latest hassle is over a number, 58.

This is not a case of numerology, demonology or anything else. It is just a number — the number of seats the government has decided, arbitrarily, there should be in the legislature.

Why 58? Well, gee whiz, no particular reason, according to Justice Minister Bob Mitchell. It could have been any number in the same ball park.

Mr. Speaker, the article goes on, and I continue to quote:

Mitchell has created the impression that perhaps someone in the NDP caucus threw darts at a board and came up with 58. Perhaps, rather, they used a video lottery terminal.

Whatever the method, the government is so enamoured of 58 that it does not want to let an independent electoral boundaries commission decide the number of seats. The commission will draw the boundaries but it has to come up with 58 constituencies. Period.

The legislative opposition (naturally) has detected the aroma of fish . . .

For the government to stubbornly stick to the magic 58, after admitting it chose the number "more or less at random" . . . would serve only to convince the real people that the opposition is right and something fishy is indeed going on.

That's *Star-Phoenix*, May 25, 1993.

Mr. Speaker, it's not only the opposition that is certain something is going on with the NDP government's proposed changes — everyone else thinks so as well. But let me say, Mr. Speaker, I believe there is an opportunity here. The members opposite can take this opportunity to say, well the official opposition's proposal makes more sense, it saves more money, and is fairer than ours. We wish we would have thought of it.

Mr. Speaker, it is all right for a government to implement a recommendation from an opposition. And in the spirit of fairness and openness and what is best for Saskatchewan people, in fact it is the right thing to do in this case. Therefore the members opposite have a decision to make.

Mr. Speaker, they can continue to ignore the wishes of the people of this province and continue along the NDP path of political warfare. Or, Mr. Speaker, they can do truly do what is right, what is fair, and what is just for Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan. They can take a serious look at the position and the proposal put forward by my colleague.

And they can, Mr. Speaker, look at the proposal and maybe offer some suggestions to enhance the proposal, and, Mr. Speaker, allow the commission to look at that proposal and decide at the end of the day the number of ridings, the number of seats, and the number of electorate per constituency. I believe that would be fair. I believe it would be fair and it would be very honourable for the Minister of Justice to take the time — and as he has told us time and time again in this Assembly that he is trying . . . wants to be open. He wants to be consulted. Here's an opportunity for the Minister of Justice to do that.

Mr. Speaker, by doing that, the government would take the redistribution of boundaries out of the political sphere and then that would allow our efforts to be directed to more pressing and urgent matters.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge all members to open their minds and their agenda today for the good of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the discussion today on Bill No. 79 for a number of reasons. And I want to point out some of them from a historical background and I want to point out a number of circumstances that exist within the framework of the rural person doing rural business in a rural community in a rural constituency so that the people of this Assembly and the people in the province have an idea about what some of the dynamics are in relation to the responsibilities that individuals have.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I've been involved in politics for a considerable length of time and it was my opportunity to run for political office in 1975 for the first time. And in that decision to do that, Mr. Speaker, I ran against two sitting MLAs in the redistribution and redrawing of the map that was done by the NDP government of that day.

(1515)

And the two sitting MLAs, one was Mr. Reg Gross and the other one was Mr. Jack Wiebe, both of different political parties. And the competition was very intense, Mr. Speaker, for that constituency, and it has always been intense because that constituency was represented by the Liberal premier of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Ross Thatcher, at one time. And when he passed away, Mr. Wiebe took that seat in this Assembly.

What happened then is redistribution took Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, which was a large seat that ran across the middle of the province east to west. It was narrow and long and . . . So what the decision was, the Morse constituency would be an area surrounding the city of Swift Current, and that would deal more with the trading area and the trading patterns of the community that these individuals lived in. And so they went, I believe, in a reasonable fashion and the NDP drew the constituency boundaries in a way that I think reflected a sense of reasonableness in

some of the things that I think need to be considered.

The Bill says in one place that there has to be considerations given in a number of areas, Mr. Speaker, and these areas deal with a number of things. They deal with sparsity; they deal with density or relative rates of growth of population in various regions in the southern part of the province; accessibility to the regions; the size and shape of the regions described; and a special community interest or diversity of interests of persons residing in regions south of the dividing line; and the physical features of regions south of that dividing line. And the dividing line in this Bill is considered to be the area north of P.A. (Prince Albert) and it runs in an east-west boundary division between northern Saskatchewan and southern Saskatchewan.

What causes me a great deal of concern in how the interpretation is going to take place in relation to this Bill is that I believe that there has been some decisions already made about how the boundaries will be drawn. For example, we have had the member from Moose Jaw say to the local paper in Moose Jaw that he already knows that that's the area that his constituency will be. The member from P.A. has also said that very same thing.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that when the provincial government has brought down their magic number of 58, they said, we will put a special decision in place to make the region north of P.A. a special region with two constituencies. They've already said that.

They do that because of sparsity of population, difficulty in transportation, difficulty in various ways — getting to know your constituency and getting to do the work that has to be done in that constituency. And they're very large. And that, Mr. Speaker, has some relevance in relation to the arguments they make.

In the same way, Mr. Speaker, the south-west part of the province of Saskatchewan has a sparse population, and that sparse population has some rights in relation to the province of Saskatchewan. And in 1991 there was a challenge to the Supreme Court of Canada. And in that challenge, the people who challenged the division as it stands today said that there has to be representation, one vote, and equality of that one vote to this Legislative Assembly.

And the Supreme Court ruled that the individual . . . the way the Constitution of Canada is drawn up, and the sense of community in Canada, there has to be a significant understanding of how the electoral boundaries are going to be drawn up.

I want to use as an example the work in the federal government that they did in deciding that there should be 14 constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan. If we were to go according to the rules that they've set out in the Bill here where we would have a 5 per cent variable across Canada, the division of the constituencies in Canada would be forcing the people in the province of Saskatchewan to have less representation federally. And that 5 per cent variance,

Mr. Speaker, would say that we would have somewhere between 8 and 10 constituencies, as compared to 14 which we have now.

And that, Mr. Speaker, the reason the Supreme Court said that you could have sparsity of population was because that is a tradition in Canada. Northern Canada, which is the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, they, Mr. Speaker, would have almost no representation if we went and did it the way the Bill is going to say that it should be done in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now using those same principles about reasonable representation to the Assembly by the individuals who are voters in the province of Saskatchewan, there should be a reasonable access to the administrative part of the provincial government, and I think that has to be taken into consideration.

There are certain aspects of this that I think are important, and I want to point out to the people in the province that we need to take a look at some of these things.

In 1975 I said that there were two sitting MLAs; they had redistribution. In 1982 redistribution again confirmed that it was going to stay very much the same way. I think there were some changes in the urban centres, and that was all that there was.

Now in 1991 we had another change, Mr. Speaker. The decision . . . and the Bill was presented in the spring session of the legislature, and the Supreme Court made the ruling that it was a legitimate law in the province of Saskatchewan. It was legitimate on the basis of custom, precedent established over a long period of time.

Now the reason that individuals in urban centres have a significant benefit, and I'll point this out. In my constituency I have about 7,500 voters in my constituency. And people will say, well another constituency has 12,000. But I want to point out to the people in this debate and in this Assembly, that I have 18 towns and villages with councillors and administrators in each one of those. And every rural constituencies have exactly the same. We have 18 towns and villages that have to be helped and serviced through the work of the member of the Assembly.

I, Mr. Speaker, have five parks in my constituency and that each one of them have a local board that runs these regional parks. And I have a provincial park.

I have 12 rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency and each one of them have a council that I visit on a regular basis. And each one of them believe that they need to have this representation come from themselves to their elected MLA and then to the Legislative Assembly. And I believe it's important for these individuals to become involved.

Now in my constituency — I will use mine as an example — in relation to the member from

Elphinstone, and I just point out that the member from Elphinstone can take the afternoon of a day in the session or the morning and drive into his constituency and have coffee with any one of a number of groups of people who have special interests in his constituency. He can drive down the street here and he is five minutes away from his constituency.

But the rural constituencies on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, have hours and hours of driving to do. The member for Wilkie, he has five and a half hours of driving to go to his constituency. That's one way.

Others in this province are even further from their constituencies. And that, Mr. Speaker, is an important part of determining whether the individual can provide a service to his constituency on a reasonable basis. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what we have to deal with when we talk about where these constituencies are located in relation to the capital, where the constituencies are located in relation to the boundaries that are natural boundaries — and we have some of those.

If you take areas of natural boundaries — and I would point out two of them — there are the South Saskatchewan River and the North Saskatchewan River. There are a lot of places along both of those rivers that you can't cross in order to deal with constituency problems. And I think that that's a very significant boundary. And it talks about that in the Bill, and that's what we need to consider in relation to the sparsity and also to the natural boundaries that occur.

If you go down into the South, you have the Cypress Hills create a natural boundary between one part of the province and another part of the province. You have that extending in the North. You have various boundaries that will occur on the same basis.

Uranium City, for example, is north of the lake and you can't really get there from here if you decide to go in the summertime unless you go by plane, because the roads are a long ways around, and in the wintertime they take in and put in ice roads across the lake and that helps. But that, Mr. Speaker, those are the reasons why. The sparsity of the population, the kind of environment, the topographical area is of the constituency — all of these things need to be considered.

Now in my constituency, for example, I live very near the centre and it's an hour and a half drive to the one corner and it's a two-hour drive to the other corner. If I want to have significant involvement with my constituents from corner to corner, it's about a four-hour drive. And that, Mr. Speaker, is of considerable significance if I want to have an involvement with them. And that is significant for them as well as it is for me. And I want to point that out to the Assembly here today.

I have 18 towns and villages, 5 parks, 12 RMs (rural municipality). I have rec boards all over the place. There is need for me to be involved with those. And then, Mr. Speaker, I have three hospitals; I have two level 4 care facilities; I have a level 1 and 2 care

facility in my constituency, along with all of the other things that occur.

And I would suggest to the members in this Assembly that there are probably urban centres, MLAs from urban centres in this Legislative Assembly who have no level 4 care facilities in their constituency, who have no hospitals in their constituencies. They do not have to deal with any hospital boards in their constituencies.

And I would say that perhaps makes it more difficult and it doesn't less reduce the problem. But in fact, Mr. Speaker, because rural constituencies have these, I believe they have a special consideration that should be made in relation to them. And I believe that it is important to look into that.

Given all of that, you could say, well because there are fewer people, you have less responsibility. Well I want to point out to this Assembly that there is a significant reason why rural municipalities should have significant representation in this Assembly, for the very reason that the population is reasonable, the distance is extensive, and there are a lot of boards and groups of people to meet on a regular basis.

Now the opposition decided that they were prepared to look at some changes in the way the boundaries were drawn. They decided that they would take a look at how to draw this up. We said that for every federal constituency, there should be three, four, or five constituencies within the framework of that federal constituency. We said there was no magic number to four, but we said we would like to see that the people of the province of Saskatchewan have four constituencies in each federal constituency.

(1530)

The rules that were applied, Mr. Speaker, in the establishment of the federal constituencies were the same same rules that applied to the way the constituencies were established in the province of Saskatchewan, the provincial constituencies. However what the federal constituencies did, they took a . . . The variable between constituencies is 25 per cent under federal boundaries. Under provincial boundaries, or these federal boundaries within the framework of the province of Saskatchewan, they decided that they were going to have a 5 per cent variable — a 5 per cent variance in the population.

And that's what they did, Mr. Speaker. And at the time of every census they change those constituencies. Now what we are suggesting is that you take four constituencies and put them into every federal constituency. You'd have four constituencies provincially for every one federally, and those four constituencies times the 14 federal constituencies would give us 56 constituencies in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now the 5 per cent variable between the federal constituencies is what we would suggest we put in the framework of the provincial constituencies. Within

the framework of the 14 and 4 in each one with a 5 per cent variable, that's what we are suggesting to the Minister of Justice and to this Legislative Assembly.

I believe that the four constituencies in the area that I live would slightly change the geographics of some of the constituencies, but it would not seriously erode some of the principles of sparsity and density and miles to travel in that relationship.

Now I see some interesting things that play into this on the basis that the Minister of Justice brought forward in his Bill. He is suggesting that every five years you have a commission set up to re-evaluate the boundaries. So every five years we're going to put a couple of million dollars into a study to see whether the constituencies should stay the same, should be changed, and draw a map that fits the parameters of the Bill. And that's what that's suggesting.

Now let's just do a time line on this. If that goes into place today, then the changes would be made before the next election. The next election could be here in two years. So two years down the road we would have an election within the framework of the constituencies that we have. Given that we have three and a half to four years between elections, you would have another opportunity for the next government to also redraw the constituencies, costing this province more money and also making it available to have what was generally called a gerrymander of the constituencies again in relation to that decision to change the boundaries and change the outside areas of these provincial boundaries of the seats in the province of Saskatchewan.

So within the framework of one election, Mr. Speaker, this will happen twice. From today till the time that the election is called for the second time, it would have already been changed twice. And that, Mr. Speaker, is another reason why we have suggested within the framework of the federal constituencies, if we had four for each one of them we would have a way of putting this together in a way that would make, I think, a considerable amount of sense.

So my discussion has dwelt on a number of things. The historic perspective of the way the constituencies have been drawn up have been on the basis that the federal law and the requirement by the federal government is that sparsity areas, the way the country is made, the culture of the country, all of these things are taken into place. And the Supreme Court ruled that that was a fair assessment. They did that in Canada. They have a 25 per cent variable between those constituencies. If they hadn't have had that, the province of Saskatchewan would have had a greatly reduced volume of members of parliament, and our representation on a national level would have been significantly less.

Now taking that same principle and putting it and overlaying it into Saskatchewan, what we are going to have, Mr. Speaker, to the rural members in this Assembly, we are going to have a reduction in the rural seats based on the decisions made to have a 5 per

cent variance and that, Mr. Speaker, is significant.

Now what we are suggesting is, fine, let's reduce the volume of seats, but let's allow someone else to make the decision about how many seats we have so we don't have the same process where individuals who are in the government can decide and determine what the volume of seats is going to be, what the volume of displacement will be, what the volume of adjustment will be between elections, and allow that to be an outside setting force. And then the determination can be made within the framework of each federal constituency. We believe that that's fair.

We also want to point out to the Assembly that we should consider allowing the commission to make the decision about how many constituencies there should be. The Bill says there's supposed to be 58; and we say allow the commission the freedom and the capacity to set their own pattern as to how many there should be.

The second point that I want to make in relation to this is the distance travel and the time it takes to cover the constituency as it relates to a rural and as it relates to an urban one. And, Mr. Speaker, I have campaigned many times already, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that the last campaign was my fifth one. And in dealing with that, Mr. Speaker, I would just say to this Assembly, that the distance isn't any less today to travel from one end of my constituency to the other than it was in 1975. I have about 7 or 800 less people in my constituency but the decision that individuals made when they were in government in 1975 are changing. The rules are changing and I say to you and to them that the same kind of conditions exist; therefore why change the rules in order to accommodate some of the gerrymandering that the members opposite want to do.

And I believe it's basically a political decision to change these constituencies, and I say to the members of the Assembly that that's not the way it should be. The commission should be allowed to determine itself what it wants to do. And we say that by saying how many seats there should be, the government is putting that and limiting that to the 58 seats in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, because there are other people that are going to want to talk about this, I'm going to adjourn debate for today and then we're going to move on to other items of business. I move that we adjourn.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I believe the no's have it.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order, by agreement with the Government House Leader, we were led to believe that adjournment would be in order.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Do you want to be on a mike or are you . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — In the spirit of the member

from Maple Creek, the member from Morse may have missed a page in his notes. Why don't you read the comment for a moment and I'll check on this.

The member from Rosthern claims there's an agreement. I can check that quickly. I think the member from Morse may have missed some of his comments that we're eagerly awaiting.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will review some of the items that I have talked about in order to have the House pass through some of the gyrations that we're going to be going through here in a few minutes.

However, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out . . . and I believe that perhaps some consideration should be given for my constituency in relation to this so when you come and speak to your commission, then point out to the fact that I held onto the debate while the House Leader was going out and negotiating some opportunities for the continuation of the debate.

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the people in the city of Regina have, for example, one mayor to talk to. The people in the city of Regina, who have 11 constituencies in the city of Regina, have only one mayor to talk to. They have 10 or so councillors. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have 18 towns and villages in my constituency — 18 towns and villages. I have 18 mayors. I have at least three councillors for every one of those towns and villages. I have 12 municipalities. I have one municipality that has eight councillors. I have 11 municipalities that have six councillors and a reeve. So you add that all up, Mr. Speaker, and that is really the dynamic of the significance of public involvement that a member who is in rural Saskatchewan has to have as a sitting MLA.

And that is, Mr. Speaker, the reason why I have a considerable amount of problem in limiting the . . . reducing the volume of constituencies to have a 5 per cent variance, because urban people have a lot greater access to their member of the Assembly than the rural people do. And it is significant, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that the opposition's suggestion that the federal constituencies, the 14 federal constituencies be the drawing board, that allows an outside agency to determine the volume of constituencies; then the commission should be set up within that framework. The commission should be set up within that framework to deal with every one of the constituencies in a federal basis and say that there's three or four or two constituencies for every federal constituency. And that would be the Assembly . . . the volume of people in this Assembly. And I believe that that would be significant.

Now when we talk about the distance . . . I notice that the member from Moosomin talked about the distance it is to the service; he talked about it in health care. And the Minister of Health is deciding that the distance in health care should be expanded, the distance to health care services should be made larger. And that is significant, Mr. Speaker.

The reason it is significant is that we have, in the area that I live, in the rural community around Swift Current and the south-west part of the province, we have people who will have no acute care services provided to them 100 miles away from that service. Now the city of Swift Current to Mankota and south to the U.S. (United States) border is considered a health care district. That service will not be provided. And I believe that's too great.

The same thing applies to the constituency boundaries. If there is a need — whether it's a social services need or whether it's a health care need — in the bottom corner of my constituency, it takes me an hour and a half just to get there. And that is a very serious concern that I have.

Now the member from P.A. who has no problem in just getting out of his easy chair in his home in Prince Albert, just walking down the street and visiting at the coffee shop all through his constituency, he can walk that distance.

But I want to say to this Assembly that if I started walking from where I live, I wouldn't get off of my property and I would still be walking, Mr. Speaker, and there's nobody else living there besides myself. And so that's the kind of thing that happens. And then I would have to walk back in order to have coffee.

Now the member from P.A., he can just decide to go down the street and get his cup of coffee and go to the convenience store. He goes three more blocks and he can go to the hospital. He can go see the doctor. He can do almost anything he wants.

And therefore the concern that I have is that people within the framework of the rural part of the province of Saskatchewan have the same availability to their member of the legislature that an urban resident has. That's all that we're asking, Mr. Speaker.

And we feel that the way the federal constituencies are drawn up, that that can provide to the people of the province of Saskatchewan what they want to have. They want to have a reduced volume of individuals in this legislature to reduce costs. Now that raises a question too, Mr. Speaker, in the very fact that will 10, 8, 15 less MLAs in this Assembly reduce costs?

(1545)

Now in dealing with this, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of costs that are going to stay constant. For the size of a constituency and the volume of constituents that you have, the price will go up in your telephone costs. That's bound to happen because you have more people and greater distance. Long-distance calls will be greater.

And that in itself will increase the costs to each of those individuals. It won't reduce the overall costs in the province. It won't increase the overall costs in the province. But for the members opposite to say that the costs are going to be reduced in the area of

communications is wrong.

Now each one of the MLAs gets the equivalent of three postage stamps times the constituents you have to be able to send letters and communicate with your constituency. Now if you increase the size of your constituency, you're also going to increase your constituents. The constituency size of the province of Saskatchewan is going to remain the same and therefore the volume of dollars paid out to that constituency will increase, but the provincial volume will still be that overall volume of dollars paid to provide information to your constituents. So I've talked about no change in telephone cost, no change in communication costs as it relates to this Assembly. So the individuals who are in the province of Saskatchewan won't have any reduction in costs in those two areas.

Now the travel allowance by members in the rural part of Saskatchewan, the way the process works, Mr. Speaker, the way the process works is that the individual can get mileage from his home to the Legislative Assembly for 52 trips a year, 52 trips a year to this Assembly.

In the rural part of the province that has a significant impact. You can drive to your constituency. Mine is 150 miles away. I can drive to that constituency 52 times in a year. The province . . . the taxpayers pay for that. Then what they do is they take the size of your constituency and use that in the formula in determining how many miles there are in your constituency, so that if you make these rural constituencies bigger, you don't have a reduction in the volume of dollars in the province that are going to be paid out.

So now you don't have any reduction in cost in your telephone, you don't have any reduction in cost in your travel, you don't have any reduction of cost in any of the areas that I've mentioned, so where does this massive development of gains in money occur? Where does it occur?

The problem is very, very significant, Mr. Speaker, and to the people of this Assembly. The problem is that the public perceive that if we have 60 or 100 or 30 MLAs, that's where the cost is. But, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of this Assembly, since 1982 when I first got elected there have been significant changes in people's expectations of what a sitting member's responsibilities are.

Mr. Speaker, I have sat in my office and I have been a counsellor on many decisions that have been made by farmers to quit-claim their land, get off the land. I've sat and listened to stories of families who have alcoholic children, crisis situations. I've listened to all those kinds of stories.

Mr. Speaker, I was reeve in the municipality for six years, and in those six years I had one visit from a sitting member of the legislature — one visit — and that, Mr. Speaker, I think was considerable. However, Mr. Speaker, if I would add up all of the times that I

have visited municipalities and been available for discussion with municipalities, you can just see the volume of this responsibility just has been increasing as the time has gone on.

And from the time when I began till now, people are dealing with this, with changes in legislation, changes in regulations, a rule for this and a rule for that and another rule for the other thing, and, Mr. Speaker, basically they don't know what to do.

And so many, many of the people coming to my office ask: how do I apply for this opportunity? What's my unemployment insurance doing? And then I say, go down to my federal constituency office and ask them. They come in and ask about social assistance, they come in and ask about a whole host of items, Mr. Speaker, that really are difficult for them to gain access to in any other way. And that, Mr. Speaker, is important; I believe it is of value.

Now you're going to take and reduce this volume by 10. What you're going to do is increase the volume of work and responsibility to the rest of the people of the province of Saskatchewan; you're going to change that so that that is very significant.

So it's not going to go . . . the volume of responsibility will not go down, Mr. Speaker. The volume of responsibility will not go down, Mr. Speaker; however that is why I believe that it is significant that the people of the province of Saskatchewan realize that the responsibilities and the jobs and the workload are very significant as it relates to this Assembly.

And they have changed. And what was considered at one time, Mr. Speaker, to be a part-time job is not a part-time job today. And I'm not going to defend how much I work to this Assembly, but my constituency has provided, I believe, for me an excellent opportunity to work on their behalf.

But I want to say to this Assembly that they are not a quarrelsome people; they are very good, they are good to me, and they have been willing to support me in this Assembly on an ongoing basis. And with all of that in that framework, I say to this Assembly that probably in the last 12 years is the hardest I have ever worked in my life. Not physically of course, Mr. Speaker, but for time spent, for the involvement in the whole process of time, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is significant to believe that we have a very, very legitimate responsibility in this Assembly. And to reduce it is also going to increase the workload of every one of the MLAs sitting in this Assembly.

I have thought about this a long time, Mr. Speaker. And I went and I spoke at the hearing the commission held in 1989, I believe, or 1990. There was a commission set up and it appeared in Swift Current; and I went and I spoke to it. And I believe the head of the commission was a chief justice in the province . . . or for Canada, and his name just eludes me at this point. But he was the former member of the legislature for the constituency of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

And that individual, Mr. Speaker, came to me afterwards, when I had outlined some of the same concerns that I had here earlier, he came to me and he said to me, he said, there isn't a single person who is an urban sitting MLA that understands what you're talking about. And he said, when I was a sitting MLA for the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg constituency, nobody understood me there either.

And so I believe that in this framework of time that is of significant essence, the volume of work that has to be done in a rural constituency. I believe that there should be special considerations made in relation to that. And as I said before, we have no value given to how much travel the member for Athabasca has in relation to his constituency. We have no way where we consider any of the travel time that he takes to get to his constituencies.

And I believe he told me one day that it took 11 hours just to drive one way to his constituency — 12 hours, excuse me. Twelve hours one way. Now that, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, is a very significant time to provide to his constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the Cumberland member probably has the same amount of time that it takes for him to get home. I know the member for Meadow Lake has a significant time. That could be about six, six and a half, or seven hours. To go to Nipawin is six hours. So the distance that it is in relation to the city of Regina is significant.

That is the reason why I say there has to be a variable placed into the equation so that individuals can have time to spend in their constituencies outside of the two major centres. The two major centres are served in a very significant way by their members of the Assembly, and I'm not going to discount the work that more people have. But somewhere along the line you have to take and value in the time spent in delivering the service to these individuals.

And I want to say to this Assembly that it's important for that decision to include those variables that take place. In a time of evolution of what governments are responsible for, what MLAs are responsible for, I think that it's time to take that into consideration. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that all of these things need to be assessed in relation to this Bill.

And sparsity and density of population at a variable from urban to rural of 5 per cent, I do not believe is taking into consideration what people in Canada said should be a part of it, what the Supreme Court said, and when they ruled in 1991 that that was what it was supposed to be. And I think that that is very significant and needs to be taken into consideration.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I deal with this, as it relates to the commission, I personally will be speaking to it on that basis; that the value and time allocation that has to be given consideration in relation to the size of the constituency, the distance you are from the capital, the volume of time that that takes, has to be taken into consideration at some proportion, Mr. Speaker, in

relation to the time that is spent with the volume of voters that are there.

That is the reason, Mr. Speaker, why I believe that there should be some adjustments to the 5 per cent. I really believe that, because that's a variable that should be taken into consideration.

When I come to Committee of the Whole on this, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to raise these issues with the minister as points that he needs to take into consideration.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wasn't anticipating on making my remarks this afternoon, but seeing as the government has changed its mind once again on how this Assembly works, I will be making some comments on the electoral boundaries Act at this time.

It isn't surprising, Mr. Speaker, that this situation would occur, you know. When anyone in our society these days offends the current NDP government in any way or has raised the political ire of the NDP in some way, there is always a given result, and that is that we unilaterally change the rules. And we either use this Legislative Assembly to pass laws to say that things didn't occur or that we rewrite agreements or we take the right of court away from Saskatchewan citizens. That's seems to be a fairly predictable result of raising the ire of the government, Mr. Speaker.

And it's strange, Mr. Speaker, that a group that is so large in electoral terms would be so insecure, so absolutely insecure in themselves and their ability to govern that they constantly have to rewrite history in order to try and rectify the situation.

And one only has to look what's happened in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, over the last 16, 18 months to verify that. If you don't like the contract that 60,000 farm families have, a legal binding contract, you simply come in here and you rewrite history and you change the rules and you take away the right of those people to have access to the court system. If you don't like the agreement that a particular company struck in the past, because it didn't go along with your political wishes, then you say I'm going to rewrite history and I'm going to redraw the contract and I'm going to take away your right to go to court.

(1600)

It appears, Mr. Speaker, that the issue of electoral boundaries is no different. One only has to hearken back to the last time that the Electoral Commission sat, which I remind, Mr. Speaker, was in the normal pattern that was established by the Hon. Allan Blakeney in 1971. And that's when The Electoral Boundaries Commission Act was passed in 1972.

And after that we've gone through the practice, Mr. Speaker, in this province of having the boundaries looked at by the commission every second election.

And sometimes that varies a little, Mr. Speaker, because as you know governments in the British parliamentary system in Canada are allowed to call elections at various times. They aren't set on a given day as they are in the United States. So we have the case of the Blakeney government calling an election after three years, in 1978, and we had the case of the member from Estevan's government going nearly five years. Governments must call elections within a five-year term, and that is the practice in our system and has been for a long, long time.

Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues wishes to introduce guests, so I'll take my place and allow him to ask leave.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, with leave for the introduction of guests?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, for allowing me the opportunity to introduce these guests in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague from Arm River, I'm pleased to be able to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly 63 grade 2, 3, 4 and 5 students from Kenaston School in Kenaston. They're seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Their teachers that are with them today are Michael Hertz, Melanie Kerpan, Kelly Ireland. Their chaperons are Donna Engel, Bev Pavelich, Francis Matovich, Gayle Lee, Yvonne Millsap, Joan Rink, Steve Prpick, and their bus drivers are Annette Jess and Les Howells.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, I'd ask everyone to give these folks a very warm welcome to the legislature this afternoon. And I'll be meeting with them in a few minutes just to visit with them a little bit after their visit here to the Assembly.

So please join me in welcoming them here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 79 (continued)

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, our guests in the Assembly come here when we're discussing things like the electoral boundaries because it affects the future of so many people like the young folks here from the town of Kenaston. Kenaston is in a rural area. Certainly the

electoral representation that towns like Kenaston get in this Legislative Assembly is a very important and integral part of being able to sustain communities like that.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the practice of redistribution in this province since 1972 has been that we go with every second census, and upon that census result being in, that we then go through the review process.

Mr. Speaker, ever since the early 1950s there have constantly been additions to the number of seats in the Assembly of Saskatchewan. That was after a major depopulation occurred during the 1930s. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan is the third largest in area in Confederation. Before the 1930s Saskatchewan was also the third-largest population centre in Confederation. When people left this province in large numbers, we then had a decrease occur, Mr. Speaker, in a number of seats.

Saskatchewan's population, Mr. Speaker, in the mid-1980s went back over the million mark again for the first time since 1929. In other words the devastation of the 1930s in our population drain was only reversed in the 1980s, and we once again broke the million-person mark for the first time in nearly 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, the progression upward in the number of seats in this Assembly is one that until very recently no one argued with. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it has only been since the agricultural economy of this province has faced tough times and we have seen rural depopulation occurring, and also significant fiscal problems occur because of that, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen the public in the province of Saskatchewan begin to address the question of the size of government and government expenditure in a serious way.

And it has become very popular, Mr. Speaker, very, very popular now amongst the voters and taxpayers in every jurisdiction in Canada to look at this area, to look at the problem — size of government, cost of government, government delivery of programs, rationalization — in what is the most sensible electoral system to provide representation to Canadians and indeed Saskatchewan people.

We have seen the rise, Mr. Speaker, of political parties in certain regions of the country. And I believe you've seen the rise of those because people have felt frustrated and alienated with the traditional political parties and the system that has been in place in Canada at least since the Second World War.

So when you see the Reform Party, when you see the bloc populaire, when you see the Confederation of Regions Party in New Brunswick, we're seeing Canadian voters and taxpayers expressing some dissatisfaction with the process.

And, Mr. Speaker, I generally agree. The Canadians and the type of government that they receive needs to

undergo some revamping. The power of the executive in government today is far stronger than it was in the days of my parents, far stronger than in the days of my grandparents. Today in the Canadian system and indeed in this provincial Assembly, the power of the Premier and the power of cabinet is far stronger than it was even 20 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't start addressing some of those problems, then indeed the alienation that Canadians feel with their brand of the British parliamentary system, I believe will begin to grow. That is a very long and deep topic, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not going to dwell on it at any great length because the topic before us is how we, as people who live within that British parliamentary system, design the rules under which members are elected to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Assembly of Saskatchewan and its make-up was last redefined by an Electoral Boundaries Commission in 1989. That, Mr. Speaker, was approximately 10 years from the previous time. At that time, Mr. Speaker, the Electoral Boundaries Commission redrew the map of Saskatchewan and had 66 ridings instead of 64.

If you remember at that time, Mr. Speaker, there was a legal challenge issued by a group of citizens in the province of Saskatchewan, primarily a bunch of professors, law professors from the universities, who issued a . . . took the challenge to ultimately the Supreme Court of Canada that the variance used, Mr. Speaker, at that time to establish boundaries in the province of Saskatchewan was wrong.

The reference, Mr. Speaker, to the Supreme Court said that there was too much variance for Saskatchewan citizens to feel equal. At that time members in New Democratic Party spoke out of both sides of their mouths. The prospect of having more urban ridings in the province of Saskatchewan was appealing. The prospect of having 25 per cent variance possibilities between the largest and the smallest riding in Saskatchewan they didn't like, because they said it gave too much power to rural people. So we had this situation where the New Democratic Party wanted it both ways.

Well the outcome of that, Mr. Speaker, was that the Supreme Court upheld the commission and the electoral law of Saskatchewan, as they had done twice previously for two other jurisdictions in Canada which used the same variation, which the federal Government of Canada currently uses and has used for some time.

And I won't go into the details of that reference, Mr. Speaker, but it essentially said that because Canada is a very large land with a very small population, with many natural boundaries occurring like mountains and lakes and rivers and many different communities of interest and trading areas, that in order to maintain what is uniquely a Canadian type of British parliamentary democracy that those variations are reasonable and a reality of life in a land so vast. And it is the reason, Mr. Speaker, that this particular

province constitutionally is guaranteed 14 federal ridings.

If one, Mr. Speaker, took the arguments put forward by the current administration and by the law professors who sought the Supreme Court judgement, Saskatchewan would only have four to five members in the federal parliament — four to five members. In other words the city of Toronto, the city of Montreal, the city of Vancouver, all of those areas would have more representation and Saskatchewan would have very little.

Now that may change, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some time in the future. But I think before it does, you will see many other changes occur in the parliamentary system of Canada before provinces like Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and others are constitutionally deprived of that level of representation which they are now guaranteed constitutionally.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would see an elected Senate before that happens. I believe that you would see the way that MPs (Member of Parliament) vote on certain matters changed. I believe that you would see a lot of effort made to decentralize the federal government more than it has been in order to make all Canadians feel part of this great land.

And it's funny, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that on the principle of Saskatchewan having 14 seats, 10 of whom are presently represented by New Democrats, there is very little complaint, very little complaint at all. As a matter of fact, the federal electoral process and the federal Chief Electoral Officer and his people and the commissions that they have run . . . commissions, by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have appeared before in the past on behalf of the federal Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, as have some members of this Assembly. I remember the member from Regina North West appearing on behalf of his party at hearings some 10, 12 years ago, I believe.

An Hon. Member: — 1984.

Mr. Swenson: — I didn't appear at the one in 1984, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but prior to that.

And you know what? That process, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is widely accepted as being fair, as being reasonable, as taking into account distance, communities of interest, trading areas, and the ability of MPs to service ridings.

And having listened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to all of the arguments placed at those various commission hearings, I find it a little bit strange that the provincial NDP would now say what they wish to put into place is a system that is diametrically opposed to the one that they support federally which would see Saskatchewan drop to four or five ridings.

An Hon. Member: — Didn't listen to me.

Mr. Swenson: — Didn't listen to me much either . . . would drop to four or five ridings, Mr. Deputy Speaker, four or five ridings. And I find that strange. I would be interested to hear the arguments of the New Democratic Party MPs from the province of Saskatchewan if in the House of Commons their voice and representation in Saskatchewan were put at risk.

(1615)

I suspect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would hear very strong arguments about how the third-largest province in Confederation should be represented. I would hear very strong arguments about how the Saskatchewan River in both its entities carves up the province of Saskatchewan. I would hear very strong arguments based on the fact that certain people buy their groceries in Prince Albert and others buy theirs in Moose Jaw; that those trading areas and communities of interest are part and parcel of social economic life in the province of Saskatchewan. I think I'd hear that.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have heard it. I've read the submissions, I listened to the hearings, and I have heard those arguments repeated over and over. And that is why the Supreme Court of Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has upheld those principles.

Now what we have today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, less than two years after the last election, is this crying need all of a sudden to redefine the boundaries in Saskatchewan. Even though normal practice would say that we would probably go till 1997-98, somewhere in there, and we would go through another census period before we did that boundary redistribution. Because there is a certain cost attached to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a certain cost to the taxpayer of the province to do this.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government politically did not agree with the process last time. This political party did not agree with it. And so as we have seen with the contracts of farmers, as we have seen with various companies and organizations like Federated Co-op, as we have seen with rural hospitals, as we have seen in so many instances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you offend, if you don't agree politically, then we get legislation. Legislation which I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they would not hesitate one iota to use closure on, as they have shown themselves so willingly to do in whatever instances comes along.

Now the Minister of Justice stands in the House and he gives some very high-minded reasons why that this has to be done immediately. And he says the taxpayers of the province demand that we cut back on the number of MLAs.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you don't have to be a politician in Canada today to realize that most taxpayers think that politicians are overpaid and underworked — overpaid and underworked — and we've got to do something about the political process.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said earlier in my

speech, I agree with the taxpayers and the voters of Canada that we have to change our system. I believe that individual MLAs and MPs do deserve more respect and ability than they are getting in the current system. They should have the ability, Mr. Deputy Speaker, without fear of retribution by whoever happens to be the premier or the prime minister, from truly representing their riding in a better way.

The British parliamentary system as practised in Great Britain allows MPs to vote against their leader each and every day. It even goes so far as to have the removal of prime ministers built into the system. And the earth does not quake and open up and swallow the country down because they did that.

I agree that those changes must occur. But the fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when the government gives that as the reason, it rings hollow — it rings hollow. And the reason I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is because if the government truly believed its own rhetoric, then it would strike an electoral boundaries commission which then would go visit with the voter and the taxpayer that thinks we have too many elected representatives, that they're overpaid and underworked.

And the commission would go out and it would seek some input from people around the piece and it would say, what is the proper number of seats in the Legislative Assembly; what is the proper cost that should be attached; how do we serve the process better; how do we serve the taxpayer better?

But no, no, the government wouldn't allow the ordinary taxpayers and voters to determine that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They will use their majority in this Assembly to dictate that particular number, and they will use their majority in the Assembly to dictate the variance.

So in reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with all of the rules being predefined, the commission, who supposedly is addressing this question of cost, of fairness, of responsibility, will have very narrow parameters in which to work under.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why the official opposition brought forward a counterproposal. Because if the criteria, the criteria is to cut back on the number of MLAs, then you should do it in the most rational way possible. If the criteria is to cut costs, then you should look how you can cooperate and work with others to achieve that.

And if the question is truly fairness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then you put in place a system that recognizes the Saskatchewan River valley does exist. That people prefer to buy their groceries in Prince Albert rather than Melfort or Nipawin or North Battleford or Lloydminster. That the communities of interest and trading areas which are natural to the third-largest province in Confederation be recognized.

I think that you would want a system, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, that recognized that. But no, the New Democratic Party doesn't like that kind of a process in the province because it might change all of the boundaries in some of their urban strongholds, and you would have cabinet ministers competing for the same seat. That you might have a system that allowed taxpayers greater access to MLAs and MPs who work on many of the same issues. But this government doesn't recognize that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they simply want to pass a law that fits the narrower context of their political agenda.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the official opposition has no problem in cutting the number of MLAs. It has no problem in trying to save taxpayers the cost of government. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is with some pride that I think of in nine and a half years of provincial government we cut the size of the civil service in this province from over 17,000 to around 13,000. And I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is room to reduce that even more in a society that understands the value of a dollar. Because our economy hasn't been growing, no matter what the government promises, on an everyday basis. The economy is stagnant, agriculture is still under difficulty, that we as Saskatchewan people and Canadians are going to have to learn to manage our dollars better.

We have no problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with any of those arguments. But what the government proposes is that taxpayers and voters should not have the right to help design the system that they feel most comfortably addresses those concerns. And the minister says, well it's always been that way. It's always been that way that the government will bring in the Bill and it will define all of these things.

And then the commission will simply go out, after all the rules are made, and finish off the process. And they will choose three eminent souls in the province of Saskatchewan to sit on there, who are above the political process, and at the end of the day we should be satisfied with it.

I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that only feeds the cynicism which most voters in this country today feel for our British parliamentary process. They truly want it back in their hands.

And I will say, the member from Greystone, who was the first to stand in this Assembly and raise the idea of the commission having that power, should be commended. I totally subscribe to it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I totally subscribe to it. And any member in this Assembly that feels anything for the British parliamentary system and how it is under attack in this country today and doesn't recognize that people are very dissatisfied with the way it is handling things, anyone that doesn't believe that to be the case had better get on their feet in this debate and announce that to this Assembly. Because I would love to send the copies of *Hansard* out to their constituents and see if their constituents agree with them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are all sorts of issues. And

we've got one in this House in this session on Bill 38 where the vast majority of people out there are saying you, my elected representative, are not speaking for the majority of people in your constituency on this issue.

And there are a few government members coming to the realization that they had best heed the voters and the taxpayers in their particular constituencies on like-minded issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not for me, the member of a political party, the current leader of a political party to stand in this Assembly and predetermine what an electoral commission in this province should do. But I would like the opportunity, as would most voters and taxpayers, to present a plausible alternative and solution to what is perceived by many to be a problem.

And I think it is only right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our society that that would be the context under which we would approach this problem. We would not approach it as the government has done, who simply looked at the electoral map and said, I see too many rural ridings who hang there like the sword of Damocles ready to cut off my political head, and I'm therefore going to change the map. That is not a proper solution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there are three or five or whatever it takes, eminent souls in this province — and I'm sure there are — who can adjudicate these things in a non-partisan, unbiased manner, then I say, put them to work. And let the New Democratic Party come forward with a proposal which they say addresses the basic tenets and concepts of how British parliamentary democracy is delivered in this province. Let them talk about boundaries such as the Saskatchewan River valley. Let them talk about communities of interest. Let them talk about the services that MLAs provide on a daily basis to their constituents. And do we provide them on a fair basis or an unfair basis?

The questions that the member from Morse raised about the distances in rural Saskatchewan compared to the distances in urban Saskatchewan are legitimate questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the Supreme Court of Canada has three times — three times dealt with the issue and adjudicated it and said yes, the unique character of this country determines that that be the case.

Now be it that members of the New Democratic Party in this province are smarter than that, a lot of people will have issue with; that they know better, that they understand better, that they can deliver the wishes of voters and taxpayers smarter than those that have come before them, people have issue with, Mr. Speaker.

(1630)

So I say to you, if there was any integrity in this new-found bunch of democrats over here who so

easily use closure, so easily use this legislature to take away rights, who so easily take away the right to the court system of our country, this bunch of new-found democrats over here, who in opposition spoke so lustily for the rights of individuals, who spoke so lustily for the democratic process, if they actually believe their own rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, it would be very simple.

The minister would bring to this Assembly a Bill that establishes an electoral commission, and he would not dictate the parameters but he would say we have a commission in place and we invite you, Mr. Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, to present what you feel is the best solution to downsizing, to cost saving, to integration, to better delivery of government services.

And they would say to the member from Riversdale, Mr. Premier, present your options. And they would say to the member from Saskatoon Greystone, present your options. And they would say to anyone in the province of Saskatchewan, the law professors who asked for the judgement from the Supreme Court in 1991, bring forward your proposals and we will adjudicate them for their fairness, for their ability to deliver good parliamentary representation to the people of Saskatchewan.

But this new-found bunch of democrats over here don't want to do that, and I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it is for very narrow, partisan, political purposes that they don't want to do it. Because no one so far, Mr. Speaker, has convinced me in the limited, limited speech that I've heard from them so far that it is any other way.

Now maybe in the debate, Mr. Speaker, some will have the courage to rise and tell me that it is some other way, but if it's like Bill 38, if it's like the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) debate, if it's like FCL (Federated Co-operatives Ltd.), if it's like so many of these other instances where we use closure, where we strip rights, where we take away the right to the court, there will be nothing but a numbing silence, Mr. Speaker, from these new-found democrats. Because precedent and history is showing us it is simply, if you offend them, if you don't fit the political agenda, then you pay the price.

And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we're going early . . . if the taxpayer is going to pay for the commission, if the taxpayer is going to have the bill presented to them for this exercise, then the taxpayer should have the voice to go with it. And they are not achieving that, Mr. Speaker, under this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I think it only proper that this government at this stage would want to rethink and reconsider on this particular Bill. It is not too late yet for this new-found bunch of democrats here to allow the voters and the taxpayers of this province to have their own electoral destiny in their own hands. That ability is still there.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is only proper then that I say to

this government that I move that we adjourn this debate today to allow that thought to continue.

The division bells rang from 4:35 p.m. until 4:45 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 10

Swenson	Toth
Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	Haverstock

Nays — 26

Van Mulligen	Serby
Simard	Whitmore
Shillington	Flavel
Solomon	Roy
Hagel	Kujawa
Bradley	Crofford
Pringle	Stanger
Lautermilch	Knezacek
Calvert	Harper
Murray	Keeping
Hamilton	Kluz
Trew	Carlson
Draper	Langford

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the members of the government are going to take a while in order to come to their senses on this issue. And I'm afraid that the indications that we have in the official opposition is that this debate shall get very long and protracted, because what we're trying to bring to the Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the views of a lot of people.

And as we've done in the past with other issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you're going to bring those views forward in a proper manner, it takes some time in order to do that. Mr. Speaker, there's the whole question of how you deliver the service I think that sometimes is missed, not only by people in this Assembly but by the average person out there.

When I think of my own riding, Mr. Speaker, I think of a riding that centres on the city of Moose Jaw, which is the natural trading centre for my riding, but goes from 15 miles west of this city to six miles beyond the town of Chaplin, the place where the big mound of white salt is along No. 1 Highway. And it touches on the shores of Lake Diefenbaker and it touches on the shores of Last Mountain Lake and it nearly gets to the Avonlea reservoir on the Moose Jaw creek, some 35 miles south-west of Regina. It cuts right through the centre of Old Wives Lake which, Mr. Speaker, is some 20 miles long and 10 miles across. It does not have a road crossing anywhere near it. It is a very large riding, Mr. Speaker, with many natural barriers and configurations involved in it.

As this member from Morse said, it takes you a couple of hours to drive across it. It takes you untold hours to service a few constituents. The nature of my riding, Mr. Speaker, is that it requires, it requires a lot of time and effort, to put it very simply.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying that the people in Thunder Creek deserve any better or any less representation than any other voter in the province of Saskatchewan. But what they do deserve, Mr. Speaker, what they do deserve is the knowledge that their electoral process is fair and open-handed and even. Because I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the constituents of Thunder Creek, the voters of Thunder Creek, who have returned me to this Legislative Assembly three times, are amongst the most politically astute people in this entire province.

They have been represented in the past by a premier. They have been represented by cabinet ministers. They have had another premier born within the confines of its boundaries. And they are people, Mr. Speaker, who take their politics very, very seriously. You don't return people like Ross Thatcher to this Legislative Assembly election after election without taking your politics fairly seriously.

On this issue, Mr. Speaker, I would like them to have the opportunity, I would like them to have the opportunity to say what kind of representation they think they should have.

And as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, there's only one way, I believe, to do that. That if we're going to move this process up, if we're going to fundamentally change the configuration of the province, then if Moose Jaw is the natural trading centre, if Moose Jaw is where our kids — a lot of whom go to school there . . . if Moose Jaw is to be part of the political life of the rural area around it, then they need the opportunity to pass judgement on what they think would be the best configuration of MLAs and seats in the province of Saskatchewan. And they should be the ones that would determine how many MLAs they will pay for as taxpayers. And they should be the ones perhaps to determine how those MLAs integrate themselves with other elected representatives in the province of Saskatchewan.

Because I honestly believe, Mr. Speaker, that the voting population of this province should not be — not be — second-guessed. I have heard every member of this Assembly make comments about how grouchy, about how cynical, about how angry people are today about our political process. Some of that, Mr. Speaker, is unfair. Some of that is unfair and I, like other members of this Assembly, think we have a legitimate argument to make about some of the media reporting that comes out of this Assembly and others, because issues are not so simplistic.

But, Mr. Speaker, if those voters, if those taxpayers, are to feel ownership with the issue, then there's only one way to do it. There's only one way to do it, and it is not bringing into this Legislative Assembly an electoral boundaries commission that has the terms and

references all dictated to it, that has a commission in place that simply appears to be the tool of the government of the day, a government which has shown itself, has shown itself to be fairly callous when it comes down to the rights of individuals, groups, companies, and whole segments of our society, in the past.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't say that in some offhand way, drawing that conclusion out of the air. The facts have been demonstrated in here on a number of occasions with closure, with access to the courts — all of these things taken away. Those are on the record of the Assembly of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's only appropriate then that with a voting population which today doesn't have as much confidence as it had in the past in its political process, that before this Assembly, before this Assembly will pass such a Bill into law, that it have the opportunity to discuss this issue in a great deal of depth, that a lot of sound reasoning has to go into this debate. And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, because the government has rejected the solution of more time, I think it is appropriate that I move an amendment to the Bill, Mr. Speaker. And I move, seconded by the member from Kindersley:

That Bill 79 not now be read a second time because the principles contained in the Bill reinforce the recent trend of legislative action against the fundamental values of Saskatchewan people.

I so move.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Being near 5 o'clock I move the House stand recessed until 7 o'clock.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave really to call it 5 o'clock. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly . . . does the member have leave? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to accept that motion?

Leave granted.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.